

its 2014 theme, Hispanics: A legacy of history, a present of action, and a future of success. The people of the United States will once again celebrate the histories, cultures, and traditions of our Hispanic American brothers and sisters from September 15, 2014, through October 15, 2014.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins each year on September 15, the anniversary of the independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile observe their independence days on September 16 and September 18. Since its inception as National Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968, which later became National Hispanic Heritage Month in 1988, Americans have taken this time to not only pay tribute to the rich culture and traditions of Hispanic Americans, but also to reflect on the numerous contributions they have made that have led to improvements within their communities, and in turn, a better America.

Our nation's success is reliant upon the rich heritage and cultural diversity of its people. Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the many Hispanic leaders and members of our communities who have added to the prosperity of the United States in every facet of society including medicine, business, arts and entertainment, sports, education, politics, and the military.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month. Throughout America's history, present, and future, the Hispanic community has played and continues to play a major role in enriching the quality of life and culture of our great nation, and for their outstanding contributions they are worthy of the highest praise.

HONORING MATTHEW BARMANN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Matthew Barmann. Matthew is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 419, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Matthew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Matthew has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Matthew has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Matthew Barmann for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following remarks regarding my absence from votes which occurred on September 15, 2014. Listed below is how I would have voted if I had been present.

Roll Number 497—H.R. 5018—To establish the Law School Clinic Certification Program of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and for other purposes—On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended—aye.

HONORING GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to recognize Georgia Industries for the Blind as they celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Since the opening of its first manufacturing plant in 1949, Georgia Industries for the Blind has been creating, sustaining and improving employment opportunities for people who are blind. Georgia Industries for the Blind is part of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency and operates from its corporate headquarters in Bainbridge, Georgia. They have operations in three other facilities in Georgia that collectively employ over 100 blind individuals. They are proof that a workplace should be welcoming to the talents of all people and should be a critical part of everyone's efforts to build an inclusive community and a strong economy.

Georgia Industries for the Blind has demonstrated the importance of raising awareness throughout the year about disability employment issues and to acknowledge the many and varied contributions of people with disabilities.

It is with great pride that I recognize the contributions of Georgia Industries for the Blind to the personal and economic independence of blind individuals not only during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, but throughout the entire year.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JANICE HAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, due to a change in floor schedule, I was unavoidably absent on Monday, September 15, 2014.

Had I been present I would have voted as follows: On rollcall No. 497, I would have voted "aye" (September 15) (H.R. 5108, To establish the Law School Clinic Certification Program of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and for other purposes (REP JEFFRIES)).

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF EL PASO BRANCH OF THE NAACP

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with Congresswoman BARBARA LEE of California, to honor and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the El Paso Branch of the NAACP.

Founded in 1914 by civil rights activist Dr. Lawrence Aaron Nixon, the El Paso Branch was the first branch of the NAACP established in the state of Texas. The El Paso Branch's long history is rich with examples of El Pasoans taking the lead to end discrimination in Texas.

In 1923, the Texas legislature passed a law which prohibited African-Americans from voting in Democratic primaries. On July 26, 1924, with the sponsorship of the NAACP, Dr. Nixon took his poll-tax receipt to a Democratic primary polling place and was refused a ballot. Thus began a twenty-year struggle in which Dr. Nixon and his El Paso attorney, Fred C. Knollenberg, twice carried their case to the United States Supreme Court. It was not until the landmark decision in *Smith v. Allwright* ended the white primary that the way was cleared, and on July 22, 1944, Dr. and Mrs. Nixon walked into the same El Paso voting place and voted in a Democratic primary.

In 1955, the El Paso Branch sought to challenge the segregation clause contained within the state constitution. The NAACP asked Thelma White, valedictorian of segregated Douglass High School in El Paso, to challenge the law. With the assistance of the NAACP, she submitted her application to Texas Western College (now the University of Texas at El Paso). Texas Western returned Ms. White's application along with her unopened transcripts.

Ms. White's attorneys, including Thurgood Marshall, filed suit in federal district court in March 1955, claiming White's rights of equal access to an education had been violated. That summer, in anticipation of an adverse ruling from the court, the University of Texas (UT) Board of Regents voted to allow Texas Western to admit African-American students, while promising to investigate desegregating the main university in Austin at a later date. Ms. White's attorneys refused to abandon her suit, and on July 18th, Federal District Judge Robert E. Thomason issued a declaratory judgment on her behalf, permanently enjoining the UT system from denying her or any other African-American student the right to study at Texas Western. He further ordered all Texas universities to immediately desegregate. That fall, both Texas Western College and the main university in Austin admitted their first black students. In El Paso, twelve students gained admission to the school.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me to honor the El Paso Branch of the NAACP and the extraordinary work they have done to make our community, the State of Texas and our country a more just world.